



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/617,291	07/10/2003	Constantin Hauer	TRW(ASG)6651	2651
7590	05/03/2005		EXAMINER	
TAROLLI, SUNDHEIM, COVELL, TUMMINO & SZABO L.L.P. 526 SUPERIOR AVENUE 1111 LEADER BLDG. CLEVELAND, OH 44114-1400			LUONG, VINH	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3682	

DATE MAILED: 05/03/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/617,291	HAUER ET AL.	
	Examiner Vinh T Luong	Art Unit 3682	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 April 2005.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 5 and 6 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 2-4, 7 and 8 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 10 July 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 9/9/03 & 11/7/03.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

Art Unit: 3682

1. The Amendment filed on April 4, 2005 has been entered.
2. The drawings filed on July 10, 2003 are accepted by the Examiner.
3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

4. Claims 1-4, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Albers et al. (USP # 6,719,324 B2).

Regarding claim 1, Albers teaches a vehicle steering wheel 100 (Figs. 6 and 7) comprising a skeleton 12 and a first detent element 30, 32 as part of a detent connection for connecting a gas bag module 10 to said skeleton 12, at least one separate support component 14 being arranged on said skeleton 12 (Fig. 1), said support component 14 carrying a detent pin 30, 32 as said first detent element 30, 32, which in *an assembled state* of the steering wheel, engages a second detent element 42, 86 arranged on said gas bag module 10 and complementary to said detent pin 30, 32. *Ibid.*, col. 2, line 51 through col. 3, line 42.

Regarding claim 2, said skeleton 12 of said steering wheel comprises a hub cup (not shown in Figs. 6 and 7) on which said support component 14 is arranged. *Ibid.*, col. 4, lines 50-53. Note that the steering wheel 100 is inherently attached to a steering column by a hub cup. The use of the hub cup to attach the steering wheel to the steering column in the steering wheel art is notoriously conventional as evidenced by the art cited (see, e.g., hub cup 6 in Japanese

Art Unit: 3682

Utility Model # 3-79471 cited by the Examiner and hub cup 84 in EP 0 830 990 A2 cited by Applicant).

Regarding claim 3, see regarding claim 1 above and note that said support component 14 is a metal plate.

Regarding claim 4, said support component 14 and said detent pin 30, 32 form a prefabricated assembly. In addition, note that the patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. *In re Thorpe*, 227 USPQ 964, 966 (CAFC 1985); *In re Brown*, 173 USPQ 685 (CCPA 1972); *In re Fessmann*, 180 USPQ 324 (CCPA 1974); *Ex parte Edwards*, 231 USPQ 981 (BPAI 1986); and MPEP 2113.

Regarding claim 7, said detent pin 30, 32 has no threads.

Regarding claim 8, said detent pin 30, 32 is threadless and said second detent element 86, 42 is a spring wire that engages said detent pin 30, 32 when the air bag module 10 is pushed onto said skeleton 12 thereby securing the gas bag module 10 to said skeleton 12, and said skeleton 12 having an axis of rotation (at the center of opening 16 in Figs. 1 and 2), said support component 14 being a plate 14 fixed to said threadless detent pin 30, 32 and fixed to said skeleton 12, said threadless detent pin 30, 32 being rotatable with said skeleton 12 and the air bag module 10, said threadless detent pin 30, 32 being spaced from said axis of said skeleton 12 as seen in Figs. 1 and 2. Moreover, note that the patentability of a product does not depend on its method of assembly.

See *In re Thorpe*, *In re Brown*, *In re Fessmann*, *Ex parte Edwards*, and M.P.E.P. 2113, *supra*.

5. Claims 5 and 6 are allowed.

Art Unit: 3682

6. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's reply must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

7. Applicant's arguments filed April 4, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

The objection to the drawings is withdrawn in view of Applicant's remarks. Further, the rejections based on Derrick and Bohn et al. are also withdrawn in view of Applicant's amendment, e.g., in claim 1. However, Applicant's new limitations such as "in an assembled state of the steering wheel" necessitate new grounds of rejection based on Albers above.

8. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-4, 7, and 8 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

9. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Art Unit: 3682

10. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Vinh T. Luong whose telephone number is 571-272-7109. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David Bucci can be reached on 571-272-7099. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Luong

April 28, 2005



Vinh T. Luong
Primary Examiner